signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.

(b) India shares a common concern with the countries of this region on the need to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism. SCO is evolving and the principles and criteria relating to the admission of new members are being formulated.

Temples and gurdwaras in Pakistan

4177. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the question of maintaining of Hindu temples and Sikh Gurdwaras in Pakistan was taken up during the recent Pak Summit; and

(b) if so, what has been the reaction of Pakistani counterpart ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During his discussions with President Pervez Musharraf at the Agra Summit level talks (15th & 16th July, 2001), Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee raised the issue of upkeep of Sikh gurdwaras and Hindu temples in Pakistan, as well as the treatment of Indian pilgrims visiting shrines in Pakistan. He noted that the presence of known terrorists who have been allowed to stay in Sikh gurdwaras in Pakistan was a matter of grave concern to our nationals who practice the Sikh religion.

There has been no evidence of any change in Pakistan's approaches and policies towards India which has included the sponsorship of cross border terrorism and adversarial propaganda.

Press Conference by Musharraf

4178. SHRI GANDHI AZAD : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Musharraf's Press Conference at the Agra Summit was within the agreed norms of dialogue; and

(b) if so, the details of agreed norms ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) and (b) Government are of the view that India-Pakistan Summit level talks are opportunities to move our bilateral relations in

the direction of peace, friendship and cooperation, and should not be wasted in propaganda or scoring debating points. The Agra Summit was to have been a retreat, so as to enable the leaders of both the countries to meet, in privacy and confidentiality, and address complex and intricate issues pertaining to India–Pakistan relations. Government shall continue in their endeavour to build good neighbourly ties with Pakistan, through quiet and serious diplomacy.

There have been several informed assessments of the negative impact of the telecast, of what was initially projected as an off-the- record breakfast meeting of President Pervez Musharraf with senior Indian editors, on the conduct and the outcome of the Summit.

Meeting of Foreign Secretaries of SAARC

4179. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation scheduled to be held on the 8th June, 2001 was postponed;

(b) whether any fresh date for the meeting has been fixed; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The meeting took place on August 9-10, 2001 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Meeting of Bay of Bengal group of countries

4180. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a meeting of the Bay of Bengal group of countries on transport and communication was held in New Delhi in the month of April, 2001;

(b) if so, the names of the countries that participated in the meeting; and

(c) the outcome of the meeting ?